

**CEPPS/IRI QUARTERLY REPORT: January 1-March 31, 2005**  
**UGANDA: STRENGTHENING POLITICAL PLURALISM**

**January 1, 2004 – December 31, 2005**

**USAID Cooperative Agreement No 617-A-00-04-00002-00**

**Total Budget: \$570,000 Expenses to Date: \$357,522**

**I. SUMMARY**

IRI facilitated a successful interactive workshop on coalition building this quarter, continued its work with the small grantees, began preparing for its public opinion poll, and has provided technical assistance to Uganda's parties.

**II. BACKGROUND**

Since the Ugandan government expressed interest in a transition to a multiparty system, other signs have arisen that commitment to this transition is weak. The changing legal climate has provided a consistent challenge as the government and the opposition seek a clear roadmap for political action. Positive signs have emerged with the court declaring a number of sections of the Political Parties and Organizations Act unconstitutional and the subsequent registration of most political parties. Government proposals for constitutional amendment, however, indicate an intention to set back other elements of the democratization process.

**III. PROGRAM ACTIVITIES**

**Interactive Workshop on Coalition Building**

IRI wants to encourage partnerships of political players in Uganda that bridge personal, partisan and regional divisions for the sake of responding effectively to the real concerns and aspirations of voters. IRI therefore sponsored a workshop on coalition building to provide political parties and civil society organizations with skills to build and maintain representative and effective coalitions. To facilitate the workshop on coalition building, IRI invited Hon. Dr. Noah Wekesa, Assistant Minister, Republic of Kenya to be the chief facilitator of the workshop. Hon. Wekesa served as one of the chief architects of Kenya's ruling coalition, the National Rainbow Coalition, and has extensive experience working with coalition building projects in Zimbabwe, Indonesia, and Malawi, among others. He presided over a two-day workshop at the Grand Imperial Hotel on February 7<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup>, 2005, which was attended by 63 political party and civil society leaders from a range of organizations. This workshop consisted of five sessions, including presentations on various aspects of coalition building and group work.

At this workshop participants examined many issues related to coalition-building. For example, Hon. Wekesa emphasized the importance of early and frequent party interaction as an essential

tool for effective coalition-building. Participants also examined the challenges of forming a coalition without losing the identity of one's own party. The presenter and participants highlighted the importance of putting in place appropriate structures to manage a coalition, help resolve disputes, and make decisions as a coalition. Throughout the session, participants and the Hon. Wekesa reflected on Kenyan and other experiences, and how those related to Ugandan patterns of coalition formation. Participants were given detailed materials on the processes of coalition formation in NARC, and also attended technical assistance sessions following the workshop.

### **Small Grants Program**

IRI issues small grants to enable Ugandan civil society organizations to host their own program activities aimed at increasing political pluralism and greater citizen participation in governance. The Institute's subgrantees this quarter have engaged in a series of projects directed toward advancing both their internal objectives as well as IRI's larger mission in Uganda.

#### *Uganda Joint Christian Council (UJCC)*

UJCC continued its "Strengthening political pluralism through inter-political dialogues in Uganda program" which began in the previous quarter. In this quarter, seven dialogues were held involving 21 political parties. The participants in the dialogues, otherwise known as the Forum, also compiled a joint memorandum on the political transition, which they presented to the Speaker of Parliament. The memorandum outlined necessary steps for constitutional and legal reform and demanded haste in these reforms to ensure a smooth transition. The Forum has also organized into committees which critically look at issues that are being discussed. An interim steering committee was set up to liaise with parliament and coordinate the Forum's work.

#### *Uganda Youth Network (UYONET)*

Uganda Youth Network received support to its initiative to develop a national youth agenda and increase the capacity of youth to advocate for their interests. A questionnaire to enable the different stakeholders to contribute ideas for the youth agenda has been posted on the UYONET website, [www.ugandayouthnetwork.org](http://www.ugandayouthnetwork.org). Three workshops where views on the youth agenda were collected have been held at the regional level, including: one for Eastern region in Kamuli District, one for Western region in Rukungiri District, and one for Northern region in Gulu District. The workshops targeted youth leaders at the district and lower levels. In addition, the process of developing the Youth Agenda has been advertised in the leading newspapers and brochures have been produced. UYONET has been able to fulfill its objectives of providing a forum for consultation on legislation and policies with the aim of advancing policies which are pro-youth. The organization has also improved its organizational policies and strengthened its structures as it implements the project. More importantly the project has, to a large extent, brought the youth together as an organized group to develop and discuss ideas.

### *National Organization of Trade Unions (NOTU)*

The NOTU project is designed to create awareness among Ugandan workers about issues of democracy, good governance and human rights with respect to the current political transition. NOTU contracted an FM radio station (Radio One) to run slots three times daily for eight days on the right of workers in their workplaces and the right to form trade unions as a constitutional right. NOTU also hosted a talk show on Radio One on the theme, “What programs do political parties have for the labor movement in this country?” The show was also a call-in program with the majority of the callers inquiring about the process of participating in unions and how political parties were preparing to include workers’ issues in their policies. NOTU has also hosted two television talk shows, which included officials from the Forum for Democratic Change and the Uganda People’s Congress. The shows entailed discussions on the positions of the political parties on workers’ issues. These activities raised awareness about processes of pursuing workers’ rights. NOTU has reported that since holding the above activities, the group has received a number of requests for more information about rights in the workplace.

### *Forum for Women in Democracy (FOWODE)*

FOWODE is developing training materials and sensitizing women on women’s participation in politics under multiparty democracy. FOWODE’s activities under this project are meant to empower women to apply pressure to political parties to include women in decision-making. FOWODE has completed a manual to be used to train women leaders on creating their own political spaces and influencing the agenda of the political parties.

### *Uganda Women’s Network (UWONET)*

UWONET’S project is aimed at bringing together civil society organizations, particularly women’s organizations, to enable them to effectively participate in the transition process through developing a position paper on the Constitutional (Amendment) Bill. An UWONET task force developed an issues paper and held a national level workshop to discuss the issues paper at length. This workshop was attended by representatives of organizations that participated in the drafting of the memoranda to the Constitutional Review Commission. The women who participated were given an opportunity to study, scrutinize, and understand the proposed constitutional amendments. The processes also saw the documentation of women’s concerns and the submission of these concerns to Parliament.

### *Uganda Association of Women Lawyers (FIDA)*

FIDA’s project was designed on the premise that democratic rights and access to legal systems are part of the foundation for a stable democratic and tolerant society. Legal education will be required during the period of political transition on right to vote, role of the electoral commission, parliament and local government, as well as on the political system as provided under the law. FIDA is therefore hosting workshops on civic education, training civic education trainers and producing simplified booklets on the constitution and relevant topics. A pre-visit to the district (Arua) where the project is to be implemented was undertaken this quarter to discuss with the district leaders the modalities of the activities and identify the venue for the workshops. Booklets with simplified information on good governance and human rights were produced.

### *Uganda Law Society (ULS)*

ULS's activities under this program are aimed at enlightening the ordinary person as to the effects of the proposed constitutional reforms as well as the role of institutions that have the responsibility to enforce rights. A training manual was developed on the findings of the Constitutional Review Commission (CRC), the government's White Paper on the constitutional amendment, and the ULS legal opinion on the proposed constitutional reforms. This document was used to conduct three radio programs in Kampala, Gulu and Mbarara. In Kampala, there callers raised issues on the CRC recommendation on compulsory acquisition of land. In Mbarara, the discussion centered on the appointment of members of parliament as ministers. In Gulu, dissolution of parliament in case of deadlock, compulsory acquisition of land, removal of traditional leaders and lifting of presidential terms attracted attention from callers.

### **Public Opinion Polling**

IRI contributed to the development of a questionnaire for the upcoming IRI-Afrobarometer poll. This poll, due to be released during the next quarter, will measure a nationwide sample of individuals on democracy and governance issues. IRI also disseminated draft questionnaires to its partners to request them to provide input and comments.

### **Technical Assistance**

During this quarter, IRI provided technical assistance to political parties and CSOs on coalition building, public opinion polling, political party leadership, strategic planning, and public relations. Due to their rapid development during the quarter, IRI focused much of its energies on parties this quarter, as all major political parties except the Democratic Party are now registered. Political parties have used this information to formulate their structures and develop strategies for the period leading up to the 2006 elections.

## **IV. RESULTS AND ACCOMPLISHMENTS**

The Group of Six, the "G6", has re-emerged on the political landscape with a declaration to form a coalition and develop this coalition to be an effective actor during the political transition and the elections. IRI's training and technical assistance for political party leaders in this area contributed to building the momentum for the revitalization of this coalition. Its support will also contribute to the skills and techniques necessary to maintain an effective coalition of this sort.

IRI's small grants activities have generated greater political involvement and activism by civil society organizations and political parties. Political parties' submission of a memo to Parliament under the UJCC program demonstrated parties' increasing input into the political and legislative process. Also, political parties developed inter-party collaboration at IRI's workshop and

overcame fears and prejudices about other parties which were previously deeply entrenched. At the same time, previously apolitical groups like workers, youth, and women have begun to engage with the political process more directly through the work of NOTU, UWONET, FOWODE, and UYONET. Finally, the projects of ULS, FIDA and FOWODE have contributed to the urgent need for civic education, given the new and challenging conditions of the constitutional amendment and transition to multi-party politics.

## **V. EVALUATION**

In working to assist its partner civic and political groups in more effectively advocate on issues of priority to the citizenry, IRI's activities have overall yielded significant results. Party participants at IRI's workshop with the Kenyan coalition trainer, the Hon. Noah Wekesa, commented that there is a great deal for Ugandans to learn from the example of Kenya's gains and losses through coalition building. Though constrained by few resources, IRI's small grantees have taken considerable strides towards achieving their individual objectives and, thereby, helping IRI to reach its goal of increasing the impact of partner civic groups. Additionally, the technical assistance IRI lends to its party partners in particular has been highly beneficial to these parties, who have all returned to IRI requesting further assistance in this format.

## **VI. FUTURE ACTIVITIES**

In the upcoming quarter, IRI intends to release its public opinion poll on democracy and governance, and conduct dissemination and activities related to this poll. IRI will also hold a workshop on strategic management. Finally, it will continue its small grants activities and technical assistance work.